



Australian Bureau of Statistics

3238.0 - Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001 to 2026 Quality Declaration

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population may exceed 900,000 by 2026

Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is projected to increase by over a third to reach between 907,800 and 945,600 people by 2026, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

These projection figures are based on a series of assumptions which incorporate recent trends in fertility, paternity, mortality and internal migration within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

Denise Carlton, Director of Demography at the ABS said, "Our medium projection series, which is based on recently observed population trends, shows the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population growing by 2.2 per cent per year to reach around 925,000 people by 2026.

"This compares with a projected annual growth rate of 1.6 per cent for the total Australian population over the same period.

"Faster growth in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is the result of assumed higher than average levels of fertility, and improvements in life expectancy," Ms Carlton added. "The median age of this population is projected to increase from 22 years in 2011 to 25 years in 2026," said Ms Carlton.

Like the total population, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is ageing. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–14 years is projected to decline from 36 per cent of the population in 2011 to between 31 per cent and 33 per cent in 2026, while the proportion of persons aged 65 years and over is projected to increase from 3 per cent to between 6 per cent and 7 per cent.

"The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations in all states and territories are projected to continue to grow, although at varying rates," said Ms Carlton.

"New South Wales is projected to continue to be the state with the largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in 2026, with between 277,200 and 289,800 people. This is followed by Queensland (between 266,800 and 278,000 people) and Western Australia (between 117,400 and 121,800).

"The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in remote and very remote areas combined is projected to grow relatively slowly, between 0.7 per cent and 1 per cent per year, to reach between 159,000 and 165,100 people in 2026," said Ms Carlton.

Over the same period, the population is projected to grow by 2.3 per cent to 2.6 per cent per year in major cities to reach between 328,500 and 342,500 people and by 2.4 per cent to 2.7 per cent per year in inner and outer regional Areas combined to reach between 420,200 and 438,00

people.

Further details are available in Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001 to 2026 (cat. no. 3238.0).

Media Notes:

- Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population projections are not intended as forecasts or predictions, but are illustrations of growth and change in the population that would occur if assumptions made about future demographic trends were to prevail over the projection period.
- The inherent uncertainty in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Census counts, as well as the method of estimating net Census undercount of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population means the estimates should be interpreted with caution.
- Data from Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001 to 2026 (cat. no. 3238.0) will also be available in ABS.Stat, an interactive, free online tool that presents data in a searchable, flexible and dynamic way.
- Total Australian population projections are sourced from Population Projections, Australia, 2012 (base) to 2101 (cat. no. 3222.0).
- When reporting ABS data, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (or ABS) must be attributed as the source.
- Media requests and interviews - contact the ABS Communications Section on 1300 175 070.

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